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The artisans, though few in number, comprised a third occupational group. Just because their knowledge and special skill raised them above the ordinary peasant, these artisans in no sense of the word walked in the rarified atmosphere of the intelligentsia. In 1937 the people of Dragalevtsy supported one blacksmith, one full-time and two part-time tailors, a cobbler, and a barber. Of course, the six or seven Dragalevtsy men who went to Sofia every day to ply a skilled trade were enumerated in the census but had little connection with the economy of the village. The few tradesmen were identified more with the agricultural group than with the artisans.

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One of the most picturesque characters in the village was Iliya, the smith. Dark-complexioned, sturdy of frame, with his stolid face weighed down by enormous mustaches, he was far too forbidding in countenance to attract the village children to his small establishment behind Bai Penko's tavern. In fact, customers often had to look for him in the tavern, where he consumed record-breaking quantities of liquor. In his sober moods he and his two apprentices occasionally worked fourteen hours at a stretch to finish up some much-needed job. The three of them combined wagon-repairing with blacksmithing, working at the lathe almost as frequently as at the anvil. However, frequent preoccupation with hinges, wagon bolts, horseshoes, plowshares, and wheel rims gave Iliya a fair claim to being a *kovach*, or smith. So did his master smith's certificate hanging on the wall.

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Yurdan, the leading tailor, was another artisan. He and his wife Zdravka were a unique couple in that they were the only Dragalevtsy people to become involved in divorce proceedings within recent years. To be sure, Zdravka withdrew her petition for divorce soon after it reached the high church court, which, rather than civil bodies, then decided upon all matters pertaining to marriage. Yurdan had a small but well equipped workroom attached to his trim little house. Although Dragalevtsy-born, he worked for twelve years in Sofia as an apprentice and *maistor*, later becoming the first tailor to set up business in Dragalevtsy.

I often went to converse with Yurdan and Zdravka, for I found them both loquacious and inclined to be objective in their views of village life. I questioned them in particular about the peasant costumes, which always seemed picturesque to me a foreigner. It was Zdravka who told me how the women made their garments.

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000 regard, particularly as the couple grew older and could look back upon years of joint achievement.

• 586 Should quarrels become frequent the inhabitants of Dragalevtsy did not use divorce as a means of breaking up such a marriage relationship, unpleasant though it was. This was due partly to the influence of the church, the only institution at that time which could grant a divorce; but public opinion was an even stronger sanction against it. The oldest villagers could remember no case of actual divorce in Dragalevtsy. The village as a whole was considerably stirred up for more than a year while I was there by the relationship which existed between the village tailor and his wife, who were mentioned in an earlier chapter.[1] When I raised the subject of divorce at one of the tavern sessions, one of the old men suggested gravely, but with what I soon learned was some suppressed amusement, that I interview Zdravka, the tailor's wife. "She is one of these modern women, you know; she has her own money and job. In fact, you have probably already met her for she is one of the servants at your school."

This looked like a gold mine in my own backyard, but I was somewhat hesitant about questioning Zdravka directly. I went to the Bulgarian teacher who had so often helped me in the more delicate questioning of village women. We learned that for over a year Zdravka had talked divorce and even claimed that she had consulted a Sofia lawyer about the matter. For weeks at a time she would stay away from her husband, leaving him in such an equivocal position that out of sheer embarrassment he used to hate to go to the tavern for an evening drink; then she would decide to spend the summer with him and help him make the garments which he sold. After two or three such separations and reconciliations Zdravka and her husband were together again. They lived in a neat little whitewashed house, quite new. There were screens in the windows—("Zdravka learned that at the College," her husband said proudly)—and there were flowers around the door. Why she wanted to leave him no one knew exactly, least of all Zdravka. What it boiled down to was the strangely familiar cry, "I want to be independent." But even Zdravka, with all her surprising initative and contacts with the

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intelligentsia, when it came to the point dared not run counter to the old village sanctions against divorce.

More often it was the husband who left the home. When he did and in rare cases interested himself in another woman, the villagers did all in their power to make him return. If he refused at first, they made him feel the indignation of public opinion, treating him as an outcast and sometimes going to the length of beating him. If he remained in the village, he had no choice but to go back to his wife. During the time he was away his wife also was put to shame, getting little sympathy from the general public. She knew, furthermore, that in case of a divorce both parties would be held guilty by the villagers, so she was willing to take her husband back and get along with him as best she could. A divorced man was considered to have loose morals; a divorced woman would have been thought thoroughly bad. There was thus a situation in which everyone was expected to marry, with no sanctioned way out once the marriage contract had been entered upon. Though such an attitude meant that unfortunate marriages had to drag on interminably, it also had the effect of forcing couples to adjust themselves to each other.

Dragalevtsy seemed a curiosity indeed: a village in which marriage was little questioned, where there was practically no marital unfaithfulness, and no divorce. What were the reasons for the family stability? For one thing, life was still lived according to ancient customs. People only recently had begun to wonder about the age-old patterns which they had been following so faithfully. Some writers would call them the "dead hand of the past," others "the cake of custom." Whatever their name, they were conducive to a common understanding of the place of marriage. All the people expected the same things from life and from the home.

Then, too, earning their living by farming was a joint enterprise. People got used to putting their shoulders to the wheel as a family group. In addition to what they all did together, women were supposed to do certain things, men other things, and children still other things. As long as every person did his part there was no friction, but quiet efficiency. Furthermore, the presence of a number of relatives made for greater stability. In the case of apparent misunderstanding